

What is claimed is:

1           1. An intracanal shield for positioning entirely in the ear canal and capping the  
2 cavity of said ear canal, comprising:

3           a conforming perimeter adapted to fit in a retaining manner along the cross sectional  
4 wall of the ear canal cavity,

5           a central porous member having pores sized for allowing air to pass through said porous  
6 member while preventing passage of fluids and solids therethrough,

7           said intracanal shield, when fitted in said retaining manner in the ear canal cavity, being  
8 positioned laterally with respect to a miniature hearing device medially positioned in close  
9 proximity to the eardrum, whereby to protect said hearing device against penetration of fluids  
10 and debris through said porous member while allowing air-borne sounds to reach said hearing  
11 device.

1           2. The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield is separate from  
2 said canal hearing device for independent insertion and removal while said hearing device is  
3 positioned in-situ.

1           3. The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield is attached to said  
2 canal hearing device for insertion into and removal from said ear canal along with said hearing  
3 device.

1           4. The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said porous member is hydrophobic.

1           5. The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said porous member is oleophobic.

1           **6.**     The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said porous member comprises a  
2 porous membrane.

1           **7.**     The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield is composed of  
2 disposable material for cost-effective single use of said shield.

1           **8.**     The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said shield is at least partially  
2 composed of polyurethane foam.

1           **9.**     The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said shield is at least partially  
2 composed of silicone material.

1           **10.**    The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said pores are sized in the range of 1  
2 to 10 microns.

1           **11.**    The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield is shaped and  
2 dimensioned to be positioned deep in the ear canal past the hair and cerumen production area  
3 therein.

1           **12.**    The intracanal shield of claim 1, wherein said intracanal shield has an oval cross-  
2 sectional shape adapted to fit comfortably in a cross section of the ear canal.

1           ~~**13.**~~    A hearing system fabricated and adapted to be positioned entirely in the ear  
2 canal for extended wear, comprising:

3 a hearing device assembled and dimensioned to be medially positioned in the ear canal  
4 and,

5 an intracanal shield shaped and dimensioned to be laterally positioned with respect to  
6 said hearing device, so that said intracanal shield caps the cavity of said ear canal, said  
7 intracanal shield comprising:

8 a conforming perimeter for fitting in a retaining manner along the cross sectional  
9 wall of the ear canal, and

10 a central porous member for air ventilation with respect to said hearing device,  
11 and having pores sized to prevent penetration of fluids and solids therethrough.

1 14. The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said intracanal shield is separate from  
2 said hearing device for independent insertion into and removal from the ear while said hearing  
3 device is positioned in-situ.

1 15. The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said intracanal shield is attached to said  
2 hearing device for insertion into and removal from said ear canal along with said hearing device.

1 16. The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said porous member is hydrophobic.

1 17. The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said porous member is oleophobic.

1 18. The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said porous member comprises a  
2 porous membrane.

1           **19.**     The hearing system of claim 13, wherein each of said hearing device and said  
2 intracanal shield is disposable.

1           **20.**     The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said intracanal shield is at least partially  
2 composed of polyurethane foam.

1           **21.**     The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said intracanal shield is at least partially  
2 composed of silicone material.

1           **22.**     The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said pores are sized in the range of 1  
2 to 10 microns.

1           **23.**     The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said hearing system is fabricated and  
2 dimensioned to be positioned deep in the ear canal past the hair and cerumen production area  
3 therein.

1           **24.**     The hearing system of claim 13, wherein said intracanal shield has an oval cross-  
2 sectional shape adapted to fit comfortably in a cross section of the ear canal.

1           **25.**     An acoustically permeative cap shaped and dimensioned to be positioned  
2 entirely in the ear canal for extended wear therein to protect a medially positioned hearing  
3 device within the ear canal against infiltration of fluids and debris, said cap being hydrophobic  
4 and porous with pores sized to prevent fluids and solids from penetrating, but allow air-borne  
5 sound passage, therethrough into the ear canal toward said hearing device.